

**CONDITION OF THE  
BORDER AT THE  
UNION: DESTRUCTION  
OF THE GRAHAM CLAN**

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Condition of the Border at the union: destruction of the Graham clan by John Graham

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**JOHN GRAHAM**

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Condition of the Border  
at the Union



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GILNOCKIE TOWER AND HOLLOW'S BRIDGE

Condition of the Border  
at the Union

*Destruction of the Graham Clan*

By  
John Graham



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## PREFACE

MUCH light has recently been thrown upon a peculiarly interesting period of Border history by the diligent researches of Sir Maxwell Lyte and his colleagues of the National Manuscripts Commission.

Although we have abundant records of all the great Border events of the sixteenth century down to the death of Elizabeth, it is surprising how little we accurately know of the barbarous methods employed in the final overthrow of the Border clans at the time of the Union of the two Kingdoms, when James Stuart of Scotland mounted the throne as James the First of Great Britain.

And yet there was nothing in the history of that memorable reign (save perhaps the gunpowder plot) of greater political importance, and surely there was nothing of greater dramatic interest.

Curiously, neither Hume nor Lingard give so much as a single page to the discussion of this great question which stood supremely first among the

problems calling for solution, by reason of the great change in the government of the two kingdoms. One might almost be inclined to think there had been a conspiracy of silence, arising from a sense of shame, regarding the dark details of Court intrigue, confiscations, banishments, and indiscriminate executions in the Border towns, which stained the opening years of the United Kingdom.

The largest clan in number, at this period, though of small importance as a fighting force, was that of the Grahams of Eskdale. Their lands were the most valuable and extensive on the Border, and the natural fertility of the soil had begun to lure the community, in continually increasing numbers, into the peaceful pursuits of tillage. Still a large number of the clan were avowed raiders, as their fathers had been, but neither better nor worse than their neighbours of other clans on both sides of the Border. And the only apparent reason why immediate and merciless destruction fell upon the Grahams on the accession of King James, was their possession of those valuable acres which the King had been persuaded to confer, as a free gift, upon one of his worthless favourites, who chanced to be a personage of importance in the north country.